

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, LY, UR, PINR

SUBJECT: LIBYAN/EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

WARNING NOTICE SENSITIVE SOURCES AND METHODS INVOLVED

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS--NOT RELEASABLE

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1. WE ARE REPEATING ON FYI BASIS THE LIBYAN/EGYPTIAN  
PORTION OF AN INR APPRAISAL DATED AUGUST 30 AS COMPANION  
TO SEPTTEL SAME SUBJECT SENT SEPTEMBER 1:

2. QUOTE. EGYPT-LIBYA. WITH THE EGYPTIAN PROPAGANDA  
CAMPAIGN AGAINST QADHAFI REACHING NEW HEIGHTS OF VIRULENCE  
AND MILITARY PREPARATIONS IN THE BORDER AREA CONTINUING,  
THERE IS, IN OUR VIEW, A STRONG LIKELIHOOD OF AN OUTBREAK  
OF HOSTILITIES WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK OR SO.

3. EGYPTIAN PROPAGANDA SOUNDS MORE AND MORE AS IF IT IS  
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TRYING TO PREPARE PUBLIC OPINION FOR ACTION AGAINST QADHAFI

FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMI SAID IN AN INTERVIEW PRINTED IN A SAUDI NEWSPAPER ON AUGUST 28 THAT "QADHAFI IS NOW UNDESIRABLE ON THE ARAB MAP. HE IS UNDESIRABLE IN EVERY RESPECT." MOREOVER, CAIRO RADIO CITED "A RESPONSIBLE

EGYPTIAN SOURCE" AS STATING THAT "THE RULING REGIME IN LIBYA HAS DECLARED ITS BANKRUPTCY AND SQUANDERED ANY LEGALITY THAT REMAINED FOR IT BY ITS PERSISTENCE IN BEHAVING LIKE AN OUTLAW GANG." (THIS WAS IN SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE ARREST OF TWO EGYPTIAN SECURITY GUARDS ON BOARD AN EGYPTIAN FLIGHT--CHARTERED FROM AIR AMERICA-- THAT LANDED IN TRIPOLI ON AUGUST 25, AN INCIDENT NOW COMPETING FOR SPACE IN CAIRO NEWSPAPERS WITH THE AFTERMATH OF MONDAY'S HIJACKING AT LUXOR.)

4. THESE FACTORS, TOGETHER WITH MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS, SUGGEST A HIGH DEGREE OF LIKELIHOOD OF AN EGYPTIAN MOVE WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK, WHICH INCLUDES--ON SEPTEMBER 1-- THE SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF QADHAFI'S COUP AGAINST KING IDRIS. QADHAFI HAS THREATENED TO BREAK RELATIONS WITH EGYPT ON THAT DATE. IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT THE EGYPTIANS MIGHT MOVE BEFORE QADHAFI CAN EXPLOIT THIS OCCASION FOR A FRESH OUTPOURING OF LIBYAN NATIONALISM.

5. WE CANNOT ASSESS WITH ANY PRECISION WHAT ACTION EGYPT MIGHT TAKE. SADAT'S PRIMARY GOAL IS TO ELIMINATE QADHAFI, WHO PRESUMABLY IS ACCESSIBLE ONLY IN TRIPOLI; THIS OBJECTIVE WOULD ARGUE FOR A LARGE-SCALE INVASION WITH TRIPOLI AS ITS TARGET. A LIMITED MILITARY MOVE, WHICH WOULD RUN LESS RISK OF FAILURE, WOULD BE SUFFICIENT TO CREATE A CRISIS ATMOSPHERE IN LIBYA BUT WOULD NOT NECESSARILY TOPPLE QADHAFI. (SECRET/NOFORN/NOCONTRACT)

6. COMMENTING ON RELATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND LIBYA ON AUGUST 29, THE SOVIET NEWS AGENCY TASS CALLED ON "PROGRESSIVE FORCES" TO HELP LIBYA "SO AS NOT TO LET THE FORCES OF IMPERIALISM DO FRESH HARM TO THE CAUSE OF ARAB UNITY." THE COMMENTARY ADDED THAT THE MOBILIZATION OF "REACTIONARY FORCES" IN THE ARAB WORLD AGAINST LIBYA WAS KEEPING ARABS FROM THEIR MAIN TASK: "THAT OF STRUGGLE  
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AGAINST ISRAELI AGGRESSION." THIS IS MOSCOW'S FIRST EXPRESSION OF FIRM SUPPORT FOR EITHER SIDE IN THEIR DISPUTE. (UNCLASSIFIED)

7. THERE HAS BEEN AS YET NO APPARENT SOVIET REACTION TO THE EGYPTIAN-DECLARED "PROHIBITED" AREA ENCOMPASSING THE GULF OF SOLLUM ANCHORAGE USED BY SOVIET MEDITERRANEAN SQUADRON SHIPS AND SUBMARINES. THE SOVIETS ARE PROBABLY

EITHER UNAWARE OF THE DECLARATION, WHICH SEEMS UNLIKELY, OR ARE DISREGARDING IT. ALTHOUGH ONE SHIP, A SUBMARINE RESCUE SHIP, DID DEPART THE ANCHORAGE ON AUGUST 26, A FRIGATE AND A SUBMARINE TENDER HAVE REMAINED WELL PAST

THE EFFECTIVE HOUR OF THE FIRST CLOSURE, WHICH BEGAN DURING THE MORNING OF AUGUST 25. A SUBMARINE IS ALSO BELIEVED TO BE IN OR NEAR THE ANCHORAGE.

8. ALTHOUGH UNCONFIRMED, IT IS SUSPECTED THAT THE CLOSURE IS RELATED TO THE EGYPTIAN-LIBYAN SITUATION. IT IS KNOWN THAT CAIRO WANTS THE SOVIETS OUT OF THE SOLLUM ANCHORAGE AND MAY BE USING THIS TACTIC AS HARASSMENT. BY REMAINING IN THE ANCHORAGE, THE SOVIETS MAY HAVE DECIDED TO MAINTAIN THEIR PRESENCE THERE AT THE EXPENSE OF A POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION WITH EGYPTIAN SHIPS. FOR ITS PART, EGYPT APPEARS TO BE ADOPTING A WAIT-AND-SEE POSTURE REGARDING SOVIET INTENTIONS CONCERNING THE ANCHORAGE. (SECRET/NOFORN) END QUOTE. ROBINSON

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